

Filter Cigaretts Cut Risk of Lung Cancer, 3 Researchers Assert

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They Cite Reduced Tar Yield,
Give Those Ceasing Smoking
A 13-Year 'Recovery' Period

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

NEW YORK—A statistical study indicates that cigaret smokers who switch to filter brands reduce the risk of developing lung cancer, three cancer researchers reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The researchers also said that smokers who abandoned the habit lowered their chance of developing lung cancer to near that of non-smokers after 13 years of not smoking.

The article, by Drs. Ernest L. Wynder, Ki-yohiko Mabuchi and Edward J. Beattie Jr., was based on a study of 350 lung cancer patients interviewed at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York between November 1966 and August 1969.

"A lower relative risk of lung cancer was found for individuals who had smoked filter cigarettes for at least 10 years after switching from nonfilter than for those who continued to smoke nonfilter cigarettes," the article stated. The doctors said these results suggest "that a reduction in tar yield . . . will be associated with a decreased risk for lung cancer unless the smoker compensates for the lower tar dosage by smoking more cigarettes."

The study didn't determine the cancer risk for persons who had smoked only filter cigarettes, the article said.

Smokers who stopped smoking still had as much chance of developing lung cancer as did smokers for three years after they stopped, the study indicated. But it added, "thirteen years after an individual has stopped smoking the relative risk appears to be close to that of individuals who never smoked." Cigar and pipe smokers in the study also showed a higher incidence of lung cancer than nonsmokers.

As in previous studies that statistically link cigaret smoking to lung cancer, the authors of the study noted that unknown factors also could account for the link between filters and the reduced incidence of lung cancer.

"The possibility that an unknown factor or factors, which correlate with the use of filter cigarettes actually provide the correct explanation of the difference, cannot be excluded," the article said. "For example, those who switch to filter cigarettes may also inhale less and it may be reduced inhalation rather than the decreased (cancer-producing) activity of filter cigarettes that accounts for the difference."

The doctors concluded that although not smoking continued to be the best way to avoid lung cancer, further efforts should be made to produce less harmful tobacco products.

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